

PASS IT ON

Riding Idaho's rail-trails with the next generation

Story and photos by Aaron Teasdale

A menacing and deeply reverberating snarl-like noise cut through the northern Idaho nighttime air.

"What's that growl?" Silas said to me as we lay quietly in our tent. "It sounds like a wild boar."

I wondered if anyone else packed into our small campground on the shore of Lake Coeur d'Alene was laying awake, listening. Swallowing my laughter, I said, "That's someone snoring."

Even with our tent-shaking accompaniment, Silas fell asleep quickly. He had, after all, just ridden the longest bike ride of his life, seen (and counted) 17 different animal species, gorged on wild berries, thrown countless rocks into the lake, fished, swam, modeled for action photography, and consumed his body weight in ice cream. Big day for a nine-year-old. But that's what this family bike ride was all about — kid-centric adventure by day and sound sleeping by night. Even with wild boars roaming camp.

We'd just finished our first full day on Adventure Cycling's Idaho Family Fun ride with 41 kids, parents, and grandparents from across the U.S. and Canada. Our munchkin-filled group's plan was simple: pedal a pair of America's finest rail-trails for four days, camping in small-town parks along the way, and create a rolling family festival across the Idaho Panhandle. We'd follow the 73-mile Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes, freshly paved in 2004, for the first three days, then end the trip on the nearby Route of the Hiawatha Trail, one of the most thrill-packed rail-trails on earth.

"This is fun!" Silas had called out that first morning as we leaned into the smooth tarmac turns of the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes on its twisting course through the forests of Plummer Creek Canyon. The first five miles from the town of Plummer,



where the trip participants had first gathered and camped the night before, were gently downhill and we made good time. Well, good time for us. Riding with kids typically means riding slow and stopping a lot — or at least that's what riding with my kid means. Which suits me just fine. (As someone noted later in the trip, "You and Silas are so much fun because you're both the same age.") There were lots of pictures to take, after all, by both me and Silas, who managed to capture images of butterflies, squirrels, osprey, several species of flowers, trees, his father, and also an extended video of catfish in the shallows of Lake Coeur d'Alene.

It's the lake that stole the show on the first day. A 30-mile-long pool glittering beneath pine-cloaked hills, it made for easy, picturesque cycling as the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes traced its shoreline. Except, that is, when it crossed the Chatcolet Swing Span Bridge, a 3,178-foot-long joy ride that led us out over the water and up a sloping, stairlike ramp to its high point overlooking the lake. Humans weren't the only ones who appreciated the view from the top — ospreys nested along the bridge's highest steel beams and we, along with Joe Loviska, the ride's staff mechanic who was somehow riding slow enough to stay with us, stopped and watched an osprey energetically eviscerate a large bass ("Awesome!" Silas said).

Carnivorous bird spectacles aside, it was deeply satisfying to see Silas having so much



Osprey gorging zone. Aaron and Silas counting birds along the lake-spanning Chatcolet Bridge.

fun on his bike. When my wife and I first started making little humans (Silas also has a five-year-old brother, Jonah), I was mortified at what it would mean for my cycling life. And rightly so — I'm lucky if I ride a quarter as much as I used to. But what I hadn't expected was the profound joy that comes from passing my passions on to my children. Seeing Silas having fun riding a bike is just as much fun and gratifying as riding a bike myself. And now it was all coming full circle — we were taking our first bike trip together.

We soon reached the ride's snack station where Laurie, a sunny member of the ride

staff, asked Silas how the day was going.

"We saw five turtles, a baby duck, a bunch of osprey, a bald eagle, and um, um, um ..." he said, while hopping up and down on his toes. By the time we reached our lakeshore campsite in the hamlet of Harrison, we'd ridden a grand total of 15 miles in five hours. Most importantly, Silas's enthusiasm never waned. (Well, except when I insisted we pedal past patches of ripe thimbleberries, which resulted in a near-mutiny.) We may have been, by far, the last riders to reach Harrison, but we didn't care. We had catfish on video!

Harrison was hosting its annual Old Timer's Picnic, and while we tragically missed Adventure Cycling executive director Jim Sayer — on the ride with his 10-year-old daughter, Keilan — compete in the sack race competition, we did see a determined and amazingly filthy boy win the grease-pole climbing contest. (Besides the unavoidable head-to-toe grease smearing, the ingenious youngster had plastered himself in dirt for better grip on the slippery pole. His mother must have wept.)

This was my (and Silas's) first ever "event" ride, and while we enjoyed the camaraderie, didn't mind having our luggage hauled for us, and adored being cooked for twice daily, we chafed at the savagely early breakfast times of 7:00, 7:30, and various other ungodly hours. I'm what most people would call a "committed sleeper," and Silas is no easy bird to roust himself, which left

AARON TEASDALE / JOE LOVISKA

us waging valiant, skin-of-our-teeth struggles to reach the breakfast tables on time each morning. For this herculean effort, we were rewarded with hearty, simple meals of eggs, cereal, fruit, or in Silas's case on our morning in Harrison, Fruit Loops and ham washed down with generous amounts of hot chocolate. It was a nine-year-old's dream breakfast. While it may have had dubious nutritional value, it did wonders for his early-morning enthusiasm.

After our breakfast of champions, the second full day of our trip began with a less desirable form of riding — in a shuttle van to circumnavigate a flooded section of the trail. On the 20-minute drive I chatted with Charles and Christine, a husband-wife pair of World Bank economists from Oregon who had worked in Africa for many years. They had never bike toured until bringing their then 10- and 12-year-old sons, Christopher and Zach, on the previous summer's Family Fun trip in Colorado. "We had such a good time on that trip," Christine said, "we wanted to try this one next."

Our day's ride was an osprey beak shy of 40 miles, so we hooked Silas's Burley Piccolo

trailer-bike to my Rivendell and rode conjoined. This handled any stamina concerns and kept us zipping along the trail ... by our standards, anyway. The morning was all wetlands, our paved byway slicing through marsh and meadow, and there were fields of

and turkey vulture having a face off. Still, the riding was idyllic and the group ebbed and flowed at a relaxed pace; sometimes we rode alone, other times with a revolving cast of cheerful companions.

It was hard to imagine, as the trail led us



Big enough. Silas and CJ ride their own bikes on one of the Hiawatha Trail's many high trestles.

white pelicans to marvel at and delicate pink blooms of pond lilies to photograph. We were glued to the spot when we saw a heron

away from the lake and into the aptly named Silver Valley, that the beautiful scenes around us masked a far-reaching environmental



Double duty. Bicycle helmets qualify as hard hats in the depths of Wallace's Sierra Silver Mine.



Self-Guided • Guided Groups • Custom Tours
in
IRELAND • ENGLAND • ITALY

WWW • IRONDONKEY • COM

catastrophe. Silver was first discovered here in the 1880s, and the valley earned its name by producing more of the lustrous metal than any single place on Earth. Not coincidentally, virtually the entire valley is now one of the largest Superfund sites in the country and the rivers, creeks, ponds, and soil along the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes are contaminated with high levels of lead and other heavy metals. The local Coeur d'Alene Tribe and the state of Idaho eventually sued the mines and the Union Pacific Railroad over the mess.

contaminated earth and cap it with a six-inch layer of asphalt. Tadaa! It's a rail-trail.

This may not be the perfect solution — warning signs instruct users to avoid polluted soil by not leaving the trail except at trailheads and developed rest areas — but it does make for one heck of a ride. At 73 miles long, the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes is the longest paved continuous railtrail in the country and it attracts 100,000 people annually. While we passed a handful of Lycra warriors, most riders we saw were either families

tailor-made for the short legs of our munchkin companions — being old railroad grade, there are no hills — and on family bike trips, it's all about the kids. As long as they're having fun, the parents are having fun.

A sun-soaked afternoon served up a cruise along the Coeur d'Alene River as we pedaled out of the lake- and marsh-filled lowlands into the Bitterroot Mountain foothills. Where the mountains begin rising in force, their bowels once packed with silver, the century-old mining town of Kellogg fills the valley floor. With a population of 2,400, it's the largest town in the valley and is spearheading the area's current economic renaissance by embracing outdoor recreation. Through the industrialized outskirts of town the trail led us, along revegetating tailings piles, past the manicured base area for the Silver Mountain ski area, and to the trail-side town park, our home for the next two nights, where tents were already sprouting from the grass.

At the pre-dinner map meeting in the park's pavilion that night, a father from Ohio told the group, "We had the moment I'd been hoping for today when my daughter said, 'Dad, this is so fun — can we do it again next year?'" Everyone laughed appreciatively, the meeting suddenly took on the air of a cycling parents' support group, and another father shared that his daughter had said the same thing. Two days into our ride and the smiles were coming easier, the laughter more free.

This was also the night that Kathy the caterer unveiled the complete dessert cornucopia — cookies, ice cream, whipped cream, marshmallows, gummy bears, and both solid and liquid chocolate in various forms. For a kid like Silas, whose parents keep a tight rein on sweets, it was the ultimate Willy Wonka fantasy come true. Predictably, he piled his plate perilously high with complex strata of confections and showed it to me with eyes that threatened to pop from his skull straight into a leaning spire of whipped cream.

After dinner the frisbees came out, slicing the air as sunset hues flamed the sky, children laughed, and we ran and threw and cheered until darkness finally settled over northern Idaho. Only then did the 22 tents of families, and one wild boar (now considerably stationed in the encampment's outer orbit), drift into well-earned slumber.



Coming out party. Silas, CJ, and Zach cheer as the trip's other riders emerge from the Taft Tunnel.

Union Pacific, who's trains served the mines on a rail-bed built with lead-filled mine tailings, offered to spend 43 million dollars on a unique remediation plan for its abandoned line — lay two feet of clean soil over the

with children on department-store bikes or small packs of retirees on old three-speeds or comfort bikes. In other words, people who might not be riding if they didn't have such a safe, scenic place to go. The trail is certainly

From Kellogg, the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes continues for 20 miles up the ever-tightening valley to higher and more remote mining villages, before ending in the tiny town of Mullan, only four miles from the Bitterroot Divide and Montana border. In a quest to ride the entire trail, a handful of riders headed for Mullan early the next morning. Silas and I rode a shorter distance to the more intriguing whistle-stop of Wallace, the only entire town to be included on the National Register of Historic Places. After a visit to a taxidermist's "quiet zoo," we joined Charles, Christine, and their boys for a trolley ride through Wallace's immaculately restored downtown and up into the neighboring hills for a tour of the Sierra Silver Mine. Once we'd walked deep into the mine shaft, our miner-cum-guide flipped off the lights to show us "total darkness." When the lights came back on, Silas turned to me and thrust his hands in the air, "Wow — total darkness!"

At the map meeting in Kellogg that night, it became clear that not all of the parents on the trip shared Silas's enthusiasm for a total absence of light. The next day, our fourth and final day of riding, would be on the Hiawatha Trail, which ride director Tammy Schurr said was a spectacular gravel rail-trail that began in Montana but promptly bored for 1.7 very dark miles through the Taft Tunnel, emerging into Idaho and 14 more downhill miles of mountains, tunnels, and nerve-janglingly high trestles. The tunnels were the concern, and the Taft in particular.

"How dark is it?" someone asked in a concerned tone.

A cascade of questions followed — How wide is it? What's the surface? Will there be people coming the other way? — before a mischievous parent lobbed out a final, "Nobody's died in there in at least a week, right?"

While we sat in the pavilion after dinner — and after several gummy bears unhelpfully found their way into Silas's pant's pocket for later consumption — Tammy asked if anyone had anything to share. Silas immediately piped up and began telling everyone, in explicit detail, about the gorging osprey we saw on the first day ("and it had pieces of the fish in its bill!"). A few less gruesome stories followed before Tammy began giving out the trip's awards. The first two went to the

Co-Motion Americano



Brooks Allen and Gregg Bleakney
on the Salar Uyuni salt flats in Bolivia.
www.ribbonofroad.com

Give us a call to chat about
your new Co-MotionAmericano



The last twelve days tested my mind, spirit, body and bike to a level I've never experienced before. The riding conditions were some of the worst I've ever encountered. The "road", when there was one, was a semi-consistent mix of deep sand, loose gravel, huge rocks and skull jarring washboard. On the Salar Uyuni, we rode for three days to a horizon full of nothing but whiteness with sunsets that made you feel like you were on a different planet.

Brooks Allen

www.co-motion.com
Toll free 866-282-6336

Push yourself.

“I fell in love with the way the FPs handled — such a smooth stiff wheel that **it felt like someone was pushing me the whole ride.**”

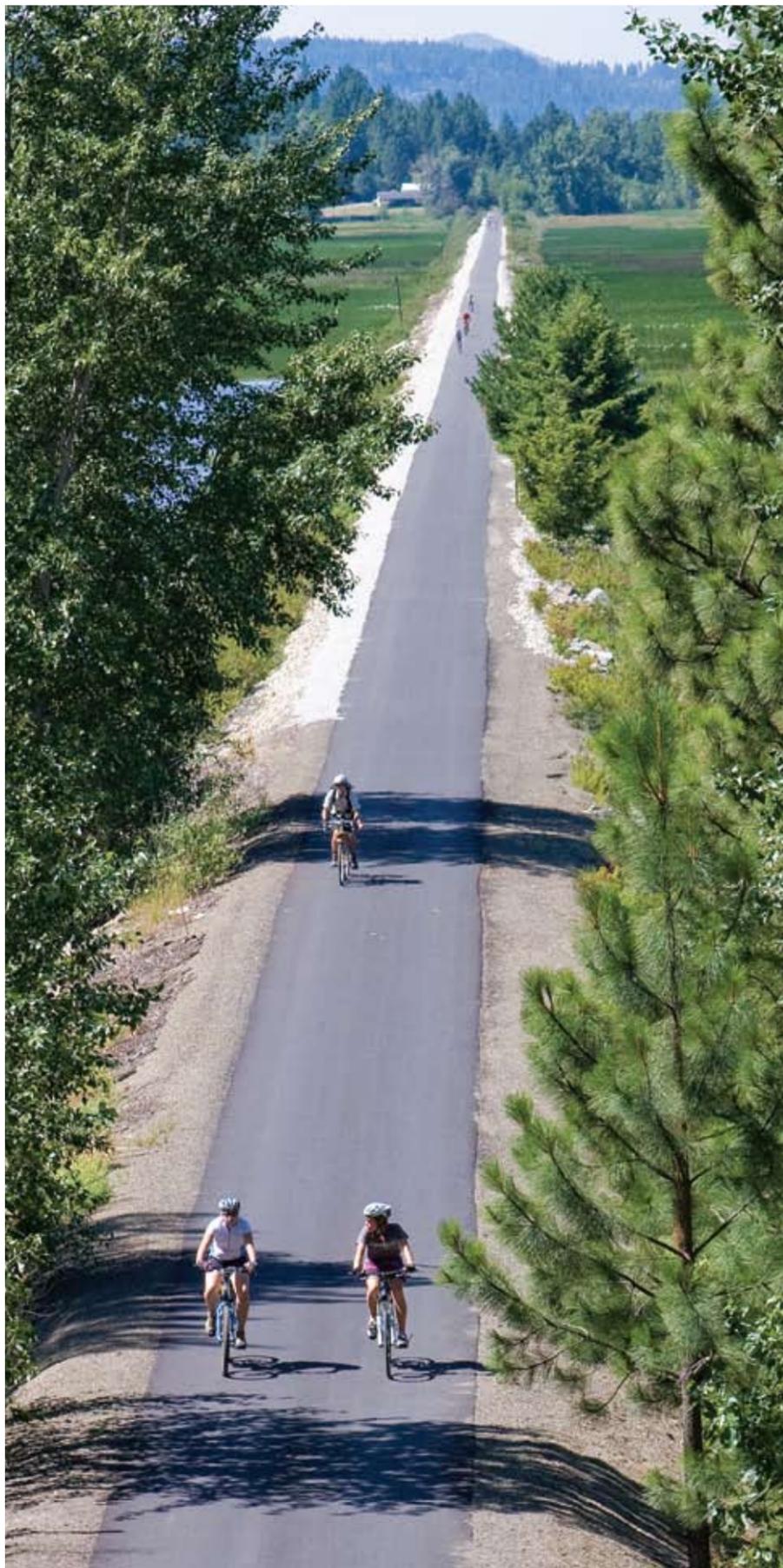
— Jason Smith, weekend road racer, **Flash-Point rider**

When you ride, you push yourself and the limits of your bike. But isn't it about time your bike pushed as hard as you did? The all-new FP80 wheels from Flash-Point provide that push—slicing the air, reducing drag with the same aerodynamic shape found in much more expensive equipment.

It's about time.

FLASH-POINT

www.Flash-PointRacing.com
Customer Service: 1-800-230-2387



No turning required. The Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes plies its way through the Idaho countryside.

youngest and oldest riders, and then, looking around at all of the kids and proclaiming that “the future of Adventure Cycling is right here,” Tammy announced that the Most Likely Adventure Cycling Tour Leader Award went to Gretchen, a hard-charging 12-year-old who had been riding with particular gusto all trip.

As evening fell and frisbees flew again, I chatted with Willa, an artist who’s toured every major road in Alaska, and her husband, Ira, who first took their daughter, Sonia, on an Adventure Cycling ride when she was only a year old. “People said we were crazy,” Ira said. But Sonia was now 12, she had her own Bike Friday, and here they were riding as a family on another of their many cycling adventures.

There was an extra buzz in the group that night as people milled around and prepared their bikes for the final ride. Perhaps it was the typical hum of a good trip’s last night, but I suspected the tunnels and trestles had something to do with it, too. One woman admitted she was nervous. No fan of dark, enclosed spaces, she’d almost balked at entering the mine shaft on her tour in Wallace. “It can be a little scary in there,” another parent told his 12-year-old son as they attached lights to their tandem. Soon, quiet settled over the park. Tomorrow, the Hiawatha.

Bicycles were dispensed from the luggage truck at the Hiawatha trailhead in Montana the next morning, while parents double- and triple-checked lights on helmets and handlebars. The kids, for their part, were riding around in mad circles, calling excitedly to each other, and saying “I don’t need a jacket, Mom!” and “My light works fine, Dad.” I took Silas and his eager trip-buddies CJ and Zach and we pedaled away, the first riders to start. Ahead of us, and closing in fast, was the arched-stone entrance to the Taft Tunnel.

“We’re going into the tunnel! Woohoo!” Silas, CJ, and Zach yelled, followed by a multi-round chorus of more “Woohoos!”

“Whoa, it’s dark in here!” one of the boys yelled as we entered the tunnel and cool, damp, lightless air swept over us. “Yeah,” another said, the tone of his voice shifting quickly, “It’s kinda creepy . . .”

It took only a minute before all outside light ebbed and we were engulfed by cold

blackness. Water could be heard dripping from the ceiling. “Are you scared?” Zach asked CJ.

“No!” CJ replied a little too quickly, and then, after a pause, “. . . a little bit.”

“Dad,” Silas asked me quietly, as we pedaled just behind the other two, “is this the long tunnel? It’s scary in here.”

I kept pedaling, one light on my handlebars and a second in my hand aimed ahead to bolster the kids’ smaller lights. “Just keep it up, guys,” I said. “You’re doing great.”

The thing about a 1.7 mile tunnel is that you’re in it for a long time, and, unless you enjoy smacking into concrete walls, there’s no sense in rushing. After a few minutes, the kids started to relax and again let out a couple cautious “Woohoos.” Intrigued by the way the damp stone walls amplified then swallowed their voices, they yelled some more, gradually forgetting to be afraid, until the full chorus built back to top volume as they all shouted, “Woohoo! Woohoo! This is awesome!”

Just as I started warning them about vampire bats, a pinprick of light appeared in the far distance. Larger it grew, over several minutes, until we emerged into the blinding light at the tunnel’s other side, in Idaho once again.

“That was so cool!” CJ yelled, as the kids dropped their bikes and jumped around like they’d just won the lottery. CJ and Zach scampered up the hillside to watch from above as the tunnel gradually disgorged the rest of our group — most grinning, a few shivering with a look of purgatorial relief.

Silas and CJ rode the remaining 14 miles of tunnels, trestles, and winding gravel path-

continued on page 35

MAP: KEVIN MCHANGAL

AARON TEASDALE / JOE LOVISA

Nuts & Bolts: Idaho Family Fun

The trails:

The 73-mile Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes and the 16-mile Hiawatha Trail (www.skilookout.com/hiawatha) are becoming national attractions for cyclists and guided touring outfits, so don’t come here expecting solitude. If riding without car support, the TCD is probably best ridden as an out-and-back, starting in Plummer. It’s also possible, for those looking to do longer, self-supported rides, to incorporate both rail-trails into larger loops, combining paved and dirt roads. Detailed info can be found at www.friendsofcdatrails.org. Future plans call for linking the TCD directly with the Hiawatha and Washington’s John Wayne Pioneer Trail.

When to go:

The TCD’s lower stretches open earlier in spring, usually by April, but the Hiawatha typically isn’t snow-free until May.

Technically, the Hiawatha’s season is May 24 to October 5, which is when the Taft Tunnel opens and trail tickets are required.

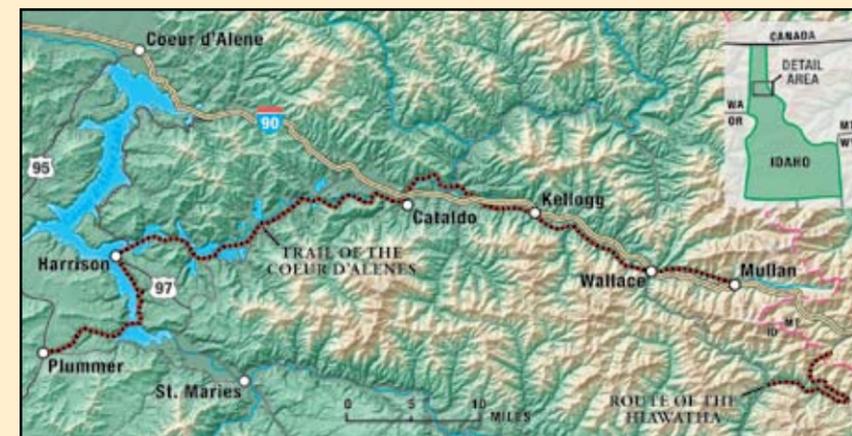
What kind of bike:

While road bikes are at home on the Trail of the Coeur d’Alenes (TCD), they won’t cut it on the Hiawatha Trail. You’ll want meatier tires – at least 28 or 32mm wide – for its gravel surface. Touring, cyclocross, or mountain bikes are the way to go.

Adventure Cycling tours:

Next year’s Family Fun trip runs July 26-31. The Idaho Relaxed trip, following the same route, takes place the preceding week and is open to kids age 12 and older. See www.adventurecycling.org/tours.

Western Spirit (www.westernspirit.com) also leads 5-day family rides on these trails in July and August.



www.TopperRacks.com (800) ATOC-021 (800) 659-5569 www.Draftmaster.com



Roof top carriers for singles tandems recumbents



Pivoting & non-pivoting styles available



A NEW DIVISION OF ATOC



Receiver hitch carriers for singles tandems trikes recumbents



classifiedads

Rate information: \$115 for the first 30 words, \$2 for each additional word. Call Kevin Condit at (406) 549-9900, fax us at (406) 549-9901, or email your advertisement to us at kcondit@adventurecycling.org.

Bicycle Touring Gear

BikeTrailerShop.com — The largest selection of Bike Cargo Trailers - BOB, Burley, Xtracycle & More. Browse our in-depth assortment of Trailer Accessories (dry-bags, kickstands, lights, Wandertec CELLO) & Parts (skewers, forks, tires). Call us at 1-800-717-2596. On the Web at: info@BikeTrailerShop.com.

TheTouringStore.com — Buy Expedition Quality Panniers, Racks, & Bicycle Touring Gear at Great Prices! See Ortlieb, Tubus, Lone Peak, and More! Questions? Call Wayne Toll Free at (800) 747-0588, wayne@TheTouringStore.com, or visit www.TheTouringStore.com.

Bike Shops

TANDEM EAST — Road, MT and Travel Tandems. Over 60 in stock. Wheel building, child conversions, repairs, parts catalog, test rides. Back-stocking Conti and Schwalbe touring tires. 86 Gwynwood Dr, Pittsgrove, NJ 08318. Phone: (856) 451-5104, Fax: (856) 453-8626. Email us at: TandemWiz@aol.com or visit us on the web at: www.tandemseast.com.

TANDEM & RECUMBENTS — All types of tandems: road, mountain, cross, recumbents, doubles, and triples. Santana, Ibis, Vision, Linear, Rans, Haluzak, Bike-E, Tour Easy, KHS, plus 20 years' worth of parts. Call or write for our free catalog. Jay's Pedal Power, 512 E. Girard Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19125; (215) 425-5111, Fax (215) 426-2653, Toll-free (888) 777-JAYS, on the web: www.jayspedalpower.com.

Books

CYCLIST'S FOOD GUIDE: FUELING FOR THE DISTANCE — "How to" guide for hungry cyclists who want to eat well, and have abundant energy. \$20. www.nancyclarkrd.com CFG, Box 650124, Newton, MA 02465.

PIVO PUBLISHING — *Mad Dogs and an Englishman* (ISBN 14120-9415-1) is a Bikecentennial '76 memoir, and more. *Live to Ride* (ISBN 978-0-9801345-0-6) is the first bicycle-touring novel, set mostly in Great Britain. Visit pivopub.com or Amazon.

Business Opportunity

SELL YOUR BUSINESS — Sell your company. Start your extended cycle tour now. M&A firm can sell your large company (>100 employees). Call confidentially: Tom Edens 713-988-8000, Website: www.marionfinancial.com.

Events

PUERTO RICO: LIGHTHOUSE CYCLING TOUR '09 — 3 days, 375 miles, 9 historical lighthouses. FEBRUARY 6-8, 2009. Day 1: 150 miles, Day 2: 100 mile day, Day 3: 125 miles. Full SAG, professional mechanics, catered meals...incredible goodie bag! NO PASSPORT REQUIRED. www.lighthousecyclingtour.com.

BICYCLE RIDE ACROSS GEORGIA (BRAG) — Spring Tune-Up (April 17-19, 2009), Madison, GA. 30th Annual Bicycle Ride Across Georgia, June 6-13, 2009. Great fun for families and groups. Various mileage options. 770-498-5153, braginfo@aol.com, www.brag.org.

BICYCLE TOUR OF DEATH VALLEY — Too cold outside? Cycle 400 miles past castles, geological wonders, and ghost towns in the only National Park below sea level. 714-267-4591, www.cyclingescapes.com.

CACTUS TO GHOST TOWNS — Winter blues? Cycle 436 miles from Tucson to Tombstone and beyond as we explore the historic Ghost Towns of the southwest. 714-267-4591, www.cyclingescapes.com.

SCAMP 'N' RASCAL CYCLING ADVENTURES — Explore Pennsylvania's quiet back roads through Amish Country, the Pocono Mountains and much more. Exceptionally scenic routes. Supported inn-to-inn and camp/inn tours. 610-317-9611 www.scampnrascal.com.

SHENANDOAH FALL FOLIAGE FESTIVAL — Oct. 17-19, 2008. All skill levels from easy family to challenging century. Spectacular cycling in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Info: www.shenandoahbike.org (540) 885-2668.

Help Wanted

JOIN THE CYCLE AMERICA SUMMER STAFF — Spend an adventuresome summer traveling while sharing ride and work responsibilities. Positions include: Tour Support Volunteers, Bike Mechanics, Massage Therapists, Picnic and Route Coordinators. 800-716-4426. www.CycleAmerica.com.

International Tours

JAPAN — The land of enchantment and great cycling presents an adventure of a lifetime! Join Cycle Japan Tours for an unforgettable journey amidst cherry blossoms, spring flowers and autumn colors while exploring quaint towns, castles, temples, stunning countryside and more. Website: www.cyclejapantours.com. Email us at: contact@cyclejapantours.com.

MOUNTAINBIKING IN THE TONKINESE ALPS OF VIETNAM! — First class adventure. Led by professional mountain biking instructor Alan Eger. Fully supported, meals, hotels. Spectacular scenery. Challenging. Various dates. www.discovervietnam.com, 800-613-0390.

CLASSIC ADVENTURES since 1979 — Full service bicycling vacations. Austria, France, Greece/Crete, Germany, Quebec, Vermont, Natchez Trace, Texas Hill Country, N.Y. Finger Lakes, Historic Erie Canal. 800-777-8090, www.classicadventures.com.

EXTRAORDINARY TOURS! — Join Team Pedalers for great rides. Alaska, Thailand, Bhutan, Bali, China, Vietnam, Tahiti, India. Spectacular routes, delightful inns, local expertise, fantastic food, savvy support, reasonable prices. Website: www.PedalersPubandGrille.com/biketours.

HOLLAND - TAILOR MADE BIKE TOURS — Individual tours in the best country for cycling. GPS route support. Top class equipment. Start and finish any date, any place. Visit us on the web at: www.tulipcycling.com.

FREEWHEELING ADVENTURES - GUIDED & SELF-GUIDED — Small groups. Flexible service. Spontaneous guiding style. Nova Scotia, Canada, Iceland, Europe, Israel, Asia. Choices with hills and distances or for relaxed riders on flatter terrain. 800-672-0775. Visit us on the web: www.freewheeling.ca; or email us at: bicycle@freewheeling.ca.

BICYCLE ADVENTURE CLUB — Nonprofit club for experienced touring cyclists. Member planned and led tours world-wide. Ride rating system with tours offering hotels, luggage van, cue sheets, and evening social hour. Visit our Website: www.bicycleadventureclub.org.

EUROPE - 180 ROUTES, 32 COUNTRIES — BikeToursDirect represents European bike tour companies with frequent guided and self-guided tours from \$600. Familiar - Danube, Loire, Provence, Tuscany, Bavaria - and exotic - Croatia, Greece, Turkey, Slovenia. Custom itineraries and group programs. 877-462-2423. Visit us on the web at: www.biketoursdirect.com.

BIKE SWITZERLAND — Two routes across the country at two levels. 2008 prices until January 1st. 10-day budget tours for under \$2,000. Traffic-free backroads, Swiss cuisine and stunning hotels all with new BMC bicycles. Check out our website: www.bikeswitzerland.com.

PEDAL AND SEA ADVENTURES — We're a personable travel company offering creative cycling and multi-sport adventures in many of the world's best places, including Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, P.E.I., Costa Rica, Croatia, Italy, Greece, Norway, and Ireland. Guided and self-guided. Van-supported. Friendly guides. Charming inns. Custom groups anytime. Over 70% return clientele since 2005! Toll Free Phone: 877-777-5699. Please Email us at: dana@pedalandseaadventures.com. Or visit our Website: www.pedalandseaadventures.com.

North American Tours

CROSSROADS CYCLING ADVENTURES! — One Cross-Country Tour each year! Experience our passion for safety, excellence, and fun! Talk to our alumni of 10-years! Hotels, mechanic, meals, SAG-support, luggage delivered to rooms, extensive pre-trip support! Phone: (800) 971-2453. Website: www.crossroadscycling.com.

ALL RIDES ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL — Challenge yourself riding 400+ miles and climbing 30,000' through the Scenic Byways and National Parks of the West. 714-267-4591, www.cyclingescapes.com.

TIMBERLINE ADVENTURES — Fully supported bicycling & hiking adventure vacations with an organization whose sole focus for 26 years is extraordinary adventure throughout western U.S. & Canada. Website: www.timbertours.com. E-mail: timber@earthnet.net. Phone: 800-417-2453.

BIG ISLAND: HAWAII, HAWAII: 3 — Ocean View Luxury Bungalows on Historic Private Ranch. World Class road/off-road biking in every direction. Kitchens, Gardens, Pools at each bungalow. Luxury Amenities. www.puakearanch.com.

CYCLE CANADA — Join us in 2009. Over 20 years of discovering Canada by bike. One week tours or coast to coast with Tour du Canada. Call 800-217-7798 or visit www.CycleCanada.com.

BICYCLE ADVENTURES' Winter Escapes! — Explore Luminous Hawaii: ride tropical beaches, portions of the Ironman route, lush forests and volcanic plateaus. New Zealand's high summer in January and February offers cycling from jade country to semitropical jungles to dazzling coastlines. Or keep cycling-fit with a cross country/skate-skiing tour in Washington's pristine Methow Valley (lessons included!) Winter Sale: Book before end of 2008 & get this year's pricing on any 2009 tour! 1-800-443-6060; www.BicycleAdventures.com.

AMERICA BY BICYCLE, INC. — Your full service bicycle touring leader. Chose from 38 tours ranging from 5 to 52 days. Let us take you on your dream Ride - Coast to Coast! abbike.com. 888-797-7057 FREE CATALOG.

CAROLINA TAILWINDS BICYCLE VACATIONS — Destinations range from the flat terrain of NC's Outer Banks and MD's Eastern Shore to Blue Ridge Mountains of NC and VA. All tours include intimate group size, cozy country inns, and outstanding cuisine. Visit our website: www.carolinatailwinds.com; 888-251-3206.

WILD HEART CYCLING — Explore awe-inspiring California redwoods, the pastoral Vermont countryside or the wide variety of terrain and bounty of Oregon. All from the saddle - all while enjoying gourmet food and small group camaraderie. Visit our website at WildHeartCycling.com for a view into our 2008 tours. Then call 877-846-9453 to reserve.

WOMEN ONLY BIKE TOURS — Fully-supported inn-to-inn tours for women. All abilities and ages. Cross country and week-long tours. Bike mechanic workshops & yoga. Free catalog. (800) 247-1444. www.womantours.com.

CHECK IT OUT! — Nevada's Best Cycling Events and Tours. Ride Nevada's ET Hwy; around Lake Tahoe & Across the State of Nevada. Website: www.BikeTheWest.com, 800-565-2704.

CYCLE AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARKS — Visit North America's majestic treasures on our fully-supported series of National Park Routes. Cycle through a painted Southwest wilderness, ride the Canadian Rockies or bike an undulating Pacific Coast. Good Friends, Great Routes and First-Rate Support! Let us help you plan your next fun and affordable cycling adventure. 800-245-3263. Web: www.CycleAmerica.com.

HISTORICAL TRAILS CYCLING — Fully supported affordable biking tours along the Oregon Trail, Lewis and Clark and Katy Trail. Friendly experienced staff and delicious meals. Plus, exciting paddling adventures on Nebraska Sandhills Rivers. www.historicaltrailscycling.com.

WANDERING WHEELS SINCE 1964. 2009 COAST TO COAST — March 20 - April 30. 65 Crossings - over 3,500 participants. #1 in Affordability. Modest daily miles, very doable. If you want it, we'll get you across. References available. Check web for additional trips. Box 207, Upland, IN 46989. 765-998-7490. Website: www.wanderingwheels.org.

continued from page 23

way together, exuberant to the end. As I watched them ride, I realized how glad I was that Silas had ridden his own bike that day. We'd debated it in the morning, but he'd insisted, and now he was taking a ride he'll remember the rest of his life. It was as great a bicycling adventure as a child and parent could ask for, and I reminded myself to savor every moment. It seemed like just the other day I was fretting about how having kids would crimp my free-wheeling lifestyle, and now, suddenly, Silas was nine, growing up fast, and I wished I could slow it all down. I realize now that,



for me, it doesn't get any better than trips like this, than spending time riding bikes and exploring new places with my son.

Once we reached the Hiawatha's end, vans took us back to our cars at the start of the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes in Plummer. Everyone exchanged heartfelt goodbyes and, as we drove away, Silas asked if we could do the trip again next year.

"We'll definitely do another bike trip," I said, basking in the feeling that all was right in our world. "But next year, we're bringing the whole family." **AC**

Since returning to their home in Missoula, Silas says the five-mile ride to school is now officially "easy." Aaron is already plotting their next bicycle adventure.